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NEW PUBLICATIONS

New Papers in the Perspectives in State Court Leadership Series
<http://goo.gl/D3lbd>

The Harvard Kennedy School of Government has sponsored a series of “Executive Sessions” over the years on topics such as community policing. The Kennedy School convened a series of Executive Sessions for state-court leaders from 2008 through 2011, focusing on what leaders of state courts can and should do in leading state courts in the 21st Century.

A series of papers is being published online, and we’ll let you know here when papers of particular interest are issued. We published one of them in the last issue of *Court Review—Opinions as the Voice of the Court: How State Supreme Courts Can Communicate Effectively and Promote Procedural Fairness*, by Texas Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson, former California judicial administrator William Vickrey, and California courts researcher Douglas Denton.

We think two more of the recently published papers will be of general interest to judges.

Social-media expert Garrett Graff, the editor-in-chief for *Washingtonian* magazine, provides his view on the significance of the arrival of social media as it alters the expectations and habits of American society. He advises state-court leaders that they “must not only learn how to communicate with new tools; they must also envision new means of judicial engagement with the public through the new social media that can further advance the legitimacy of courts in a democratic society.” His paper is *Courts as Conversations: An Argument for Increased Engagement by Court Leaders*.

Greg A. Rowe, a government official who regularly handles legislative matters, provides advice for court leaders on how

better to interact with the leaders of the other branches of government on budget matters. Rowe is the Chief of the Legislation and Policy Unit for the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, and he provides 16 specific recommendations for judicial-branch leaders on dealing with the other branches of government on budget issues. He includes advice on how to understand the political environment, how to develop relationships with key groups and individuals, and how to create a coherent communications strategy. His paper is *Keeping Courts Funded: Recommendations on How Courts Can Avoid the Budget Axe*.

The Harvard Kennedy School of Government and the National Center for State Courts publish the papers. The Bureau of Justice Assistance, the State Justice Institute, and the National Center for State Courts provided funding for the Executive Sessions on court leadership. All of the papers are available at the website noted above.



WEB RESOURCES

Center on Court Access to Justice for All
<http://www.ncsc.org/atj>

The National Center for State Courts has established a web-based Center on Court Access to Justice for All, which seeks to assist judges and courts in providing better access to justice. The Center works with a number of national organizations, including the American Judges Association, to implement realistic access-to-justice solutions.

One key feature of the Center is a series of “Access Briefs,” short papers on key topics for access to justice. The first paper, issued in November 2012, is on self-help services (<http://goo.gl/FvGv1>). It’s an 11-page paper setting out various options for providing help to the self-represented litigant, with examples of courts that have set up useful websites, courthouse desks or

offices, telephone-based programs, in-person clinics, and courtroom assistance.

The paper is written by two staffers of the National Center for State Courts—Deborah Saunders, a senior knowledge and information services analyst, and Pamela Casey, a principal court research consultant—along with Richard Zorza, a long-time advocate of better resources for the self-represented. One of the best features of the paper, as accessed online, is that there are four pages of endnotes following the paper that are chocked with links to examples of all sorts of methods for helping self-represented litigants as well as key articles in this area that provide greater detail.

The Center also offers technical assistance to state and local courts seeking help in providing better access to justice. Click the “Assistance” tab on the Center’s home page and you’ll find a link to the “technical assistance request form.” The Center can provide help on topics like simplifying forms and using plain language, training court staff to provide information to self-represented litigants, and how to use pro bono attorneys to help the self-represented.

e-Courts 2012 Conference Materials
<http://www.e-courts.org>

More than 500 judges, court administrators, and others attended e-Courts 2012 in Las Vegas in December. Materials from the conference, sponsored by the National Center for State Courts, have been posted online. You can take a look at the program schedule and, for most of the programs, take a look at the PowerPoint or other presentation materials.

For those who want an overview of the issues involved in moving from paper to computer for court records and functions, along with the present state of the art, these materials can be useful. Programs at the conference included the return on investment for switching to the e-court model, tech tips for judges, and ways to improve a court website.